



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Secretary General's Report on the Implementation of the 2004 OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality

As delivered by Charge d'Affaires, Gary D. Robbins
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
September 15, 2011

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States joins other delegations in expressing appreciation for this very comprehensive report. We would like to thank the Secretary General, the Gender Unit, ODIHR, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, the Representative on Freedom of the Media, and all those in various OSCE structures who contributed.

The United States strongly supports efforts to make gender issues a priority in all three OSCE dimensions, including in the politico-military and the economic and environmental dimensions, where women are still significantly under-represented. We attach great importance to the discussions of gender and security in the FSC and the Security Committee this past year and would like to see them continued.

The United States commends the Secretariat's continuing development of tools and methodologies to help participating States implement their commitments on gender equality. A growing number of field operations focusing on integrating a gender perspective into OSCE policies, programs and field work and the appointment of gender focal points in field operations are noteworthy examples of progress in mainstreaming gender issues. We likewise applaud the March 2011 conference on Women's Entrepreneurship in the OSCE: Trends and Good Practices and the continuing publication of the newsletter "Gender Monitor" to highlight best practices.

We also commend the steady increase in the recruitment of women to higher management positions and hope to see improvement also in the representation of women in OSCE field missions and institutions. The United States has been a strong advocate and actor in pursuing this goal. According to the report more than half of all OSCE staff seconded by the United States is female. We believe more can and should be done. As the CiO's Special Representative on Gender Affairs Wendy Patten highlighted in March, the severe under-representation of women among Heads of Mission and Deputy Heads of Mission remains a matter of grave concern. We urge participating States to nominate more qualified female candidates to fill these and other critical positions in top OSCE leadership and management. We appreciate the increasing number of gender-inclusive projects and programs conducted in the field missions across all three dimensions, but we believe that additional attention can be paid to initiatives that boost the participation of women in conflict prevention, crisis management, conflict resolution, and post-conflict rehabilitation efforts. Programs initiated by OSCE missions in Armenia, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia are noteworthy examples.

Similarly, we commend ODIHR for the development of its Human Rights, Women and Security Programme as well as its focus and training on Women in Armed Forces within its new Handbook on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Armed Forces Personnel. Marking the 10th Anniversary of UN Resolution 1325, the U.S. delegation co-sponsored a side event at the Review Conference in Warsaw to discuss successful strategies for involving women in security, conflict resolution and peace building.

OSCE participating States have yet to implement all gender-related OSCE commitments and we strongly encourage continued efforts to help participating States reach gender equality, prevention of violence against women, women's political and economic participation, and inclusion of women in conflict prevention, crisis management and post conflict reconstruction. In concluding, I quote Secretary Clinton on the occasion of the centennial of International Women's Day in March of this year: "... the United States continues to make women a cornerstone of our foreign policy. It's not just the right thing to do. It's the smart thing. Women and girls drive our economies. They build peace and prosperity. Investing in them means investing in global economic progress, political stability, and greater prosperity for everyone – the world over."

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.